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A
S E R M O N
UPON 4473.e.23.
EMBER-WEEK: 1-17.

Preach'd before the
UNIVERSITY
OF
OXFORD.

By D. J. A. M.

This SERMON was Preach'd about ⁵⁰~~Thirty~~
Years ago, and gave great Offence to many,
by reason the Preacher Severely reprov'd
Ignorant, Idle, Covetous, Voluptuous, Proud
and Deceitful Clergymen; the Design of
Printing it now is, to Inform young Clergy
men of their Duty, and to excite them to
the Practice of it.

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SEERMON

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Matth. ix. 36, 37, 38.

When Jesus saw the Multitude, he was moved with Compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as Sheep having no Shepherd. Then saith he unto his Disciples, The Harvest truly is Plenteous, but the Labourers are Few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest.



EXT Lord's-Day is Ordination-Day, that Day upon which Learned and Religious Men are to be Ordained Priests and Deacons; and next Week is Ember-Week; That Week which is Emphatically call'd, a Week of Embers or Ashes. For, these two Words do only signify one and the same Thing.

And the Reason why this Week is thus called, is this, The Church hath commanded us to Fast and to Pray upon three days in this Week, *That God would be pleased to give us such Ministers, as are both Willing and Able, both by their Life and Doctrine, to set forth his Glory, and to set forward the Salvation of all Men.* And these three Days have been heretofore so strictly kept by holy Men and Women, that they cover'd themselves with Sackcloth and Ashes, and ate nothing till Night, nor then neither, save only a Cake baked under the Embers; which was therefore called Ember-bread. And from this strictness and severity which was formerly used upon the three Fasting-days in this Week, the whole Week came to be called Ember-Week.

And the Reason of all this strictness and severity upon this Occasion, is this, When men do Fast from Meat, they acknowledge themselves to be Unworthy of the least Crumb of that Meat they Fast from. And when they do, in the time of their Fasting, cover themselves with Sackcloth, they acknowledge That to be far better than they deserve. They call to mind, that their Clothing is only the effect of their Nakedness; and that their Nakedness is only the effect of their Sin: And therefore, they are resolv'd not to be Proud of those Clothes, which ought to Humble them with the Thoughts of their first Original, and to put them in mind of those tatter'd Rags they are Now Clothed with, instead of that Glorious Robe of Righteousness, which they once had in Paradise. When men do cast Embers, and sprinkle Ashes upon their Heads, they publicly tell God, that their Sins are so many, and so great, that they deserve nothing, but Death; they deserve nothing, but to have Those dreadful Words, *in the Office for the Burial of the Dead*, constantly sounding in their Ears, *Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, and Dust to Dust*. And when Men do thus Openly declare their inward Sorrow of Heart, by these and the like outward signs of Fasting and Mortification, they mightily move both God and Man to have Mercy upon them. For, *when the Servants of Ben-badad, King of Syria, girded Sackcloth on their Loins, and put Ropes on their Heads, and presented themselves to Abab, King of Israel, in that humble and miserable Condition, he could not chuse but have Pity upon him, though God had appointed him to utter Destruction, and though he and his People were to lose their Lives, for saving him and his People from Death, 1 Kings xx. 32, 42. Yea, and that very same Abab, by Humbling himself with Fasting in Sackcloth and Ashes, mov'd God to take away from him one of the greatest temporal Judgments, that ever was threatned against a mortal*
 Man,

Man, 1 *Kings* xxi. 17. with the following Verses to the End of the Chapter.

And here now, let no Proud Sinner, that despiseth the Ministers of God's Word, imagine, that the Day appointed for the Ordination of Priests and Deacons, is not of so great Concern to the Nation, that it ought to be kept with so much Strictness and Solemnity : Let no Graceless Person think so scornfully of Ember-Week and Ordination-Day : *For, the Apostles thought themselves bound, to Ordain no Elders in any Church, without the Solemnity of a Fast, Acts xiv. 23. And Christ himself, before he enter'd upon his Ministerial Office, Fasted forty Days and forty Nights, Mat. iv. 2, 17.* And if Fasting, and so long Fasting, was Necessary to fit and prepare Christ for the Ministry, how much more Necessary is it to fit and prepare Us for it, who are Infinitely short of his Divine Perfections ?

And thus I have shewn you, what is meant by Ordination-Day, and what is meant by Ember-Week. And that you may all keep them, as they ought to be kept, I have purposely pitch'd upon these Words, *which are the Gospel for the Ordination of Priests*, as being most proper for this Great Occasion, and our most Serious Meditation upon it. *When Jesus saw the Multitude, he was moved with Compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as Sheep having no Shepherd. Then said he unto his Disciples, The Harvest truly is Plenteous, but the Labourers are Few : Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest.*

In which Words there are several Doctrines : But I can, at present, only insist upon this One.

Though there be a great many Ministers in a City or Country ; yet, the Common People may be ready to Faint, and to Perish for want of Knowledge ; for want of Plain, Affectionate, Practical, and Scripture-Predaching : Yea, and their Case may be so desperately Bad, that nothing but a Company of poor silly Sheep scatter'd abroad without

a Shepherd, can possibly represent their deplorable Condition,
And the Reasons, which prove this Doctrine, are these;

First, There were a great many Scribes, and Pharisees, and Lawyers in our Saviour's time. For, he denounced more Woes, and greater Curses against them, than against all others; because they were more against him and his Gospel, than all others were, *Mat. xxiii.* throughout the Chapter. And yet, notwithstanding there were so many Ministers, and Doctors, and Preachers of the Law at that time, the Text tells us, *The Labourers were Few.* Few of them all would Labour in the Harvest, and Feed the Flock of the Lord. And therefore, *The Multitude Fainted.* Or, as the Margin of the Bible has it, *They were Tired,* by going so far to hear an Awakening Preacher, and they *Lay down* for Weariness, *and they were scattered abroad, as Sheep having no Shepherd.* And what was their Case then, may, for any thing we know, be the Case of several Thousands and Millions at this present time: For, *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: And there is no New thing under the Sun,* Eccl. i. 9.

Secondly, The Scripture tells us of some, *who ought to be Teachers,* but in Truth, *have need to be Taught themselves the very first Principles of the Oracles of God,* Heb. v. 12. They set up for Preachers, before they well understand their Catechism; *That Form of Doctrine, that Form of Sound Words, and that Form of Knowledge and Truth,* which they ought to be first Instructed in. For, says the Prophet, *Isa. lvi. 10, 11. His watchmen and his Shepherds are Blind; they are all Ignorant; they are all Dumb Dogs; they cannot bark, they cannot Understand.* And if poor Ignorant People have such an Ignorant Man for their Minister, must they not, without a Miracle, necessarily Perish for want of Knowledge? For, how can the Blind lead the Blind? Or, how can the Dumb speak to the Deaf? Or, how can the Ignorant Guide Teach his People Knowledge? *Thirdly,*

Thirdly, The Scripture tells us of others, who, though they are Learned enough, and Able enough to Preach to their People; yet, they are not Willing enough to do it. They are Idle and Lazy; *they put their Candle under a Bushel; they hide their Talent in a Napkin*; and they keep their Learning to themselves, as a stingy Miser does his Gold, and no Man is ever the better for it. For, says the Prophet, *Isaiah, lvi. 10. They Sleep, they Lie down, they love to Slumber.* And this Character did not only belong to some few of them: For, it is there said, they *All* did so: That is, the Generality and the greatest part of them did so. And if poor Ignorant People have such an *Idle* Man for their Minister, must they not, without a Miracle, Necessarily Perish for want of Knowledge? For, what matter is it, whether a Man starve for want of Money to buy him Meat, or for want of a Heart to use his Money for his necessary Support? And, what matter is it, whether a Man's Guide be *Ignorant and cannot*; or whether he be *Learned, and will not shew him the Way to Heaven?*

Fourthly, The Scripture tells us of others, who though they are neither Ignorant nor Idle; but very Learned, and very Laborious: Yet, they are *Covetous* and *Voluptuous*. They use neither their Learning nor their Labour in Preaching to their People, but in seeking what they have, and in getting it away from them. They seek not Them, but Theirs; not their Souls, but their Riches. Their whole Business is only, *to Devour Widows Houses, and to Turn the House of God into a Den of Thieves.* For, says the Prophet, *Isa. lvi. 11. They are Greedy Dogs, which can never have enough; they all look to their own Way, every one for his Gain from his Quarter.* And that you may know, what they do with all that they thus *Covetously* scrape together, their *Voluptuousness* follows in the next Words; they bestow it all upon their Lusts, upon their filthy Pleasure. For, it is there said of them,

them, *Verse 12.* Come ye, say they, I will fetch Wine, and we will fill ourselves with Strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this Day, and much more abundant. And that you may not think, that this one Prophet only met with bad Ministers, hear what is written, *Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 4.* Woe be to the Shepherds of Israel, that feed themselves, that eat the Fat, and clothe them with the Wool, and kill them that are Fed; but, Feed not the Flock, but Rule them with Force and Cruelty. And that you may not think, that this was only the Character of some few of them, it is there added, *Ver. 5, 6.* There was no Shepherd; but, all the Sheep, and all the Flocks, were scattered upon all the Face of the Earth: And Nine, mark it, not One, did Search or Seek after them. And therefore, this dreadful Curse is denounced against them, *Zech. xi. 17.* Woe to the Idol-Shepherd. That is, that Man who pretends to be a Shepherd, but is no more a Shepherd, than an Idol, which pretends to be God, is God. Woe to the Idol Shepherd, that leaveth the Flock to the Care of a Hireling: The Sword shall be upon his Arm, and upon his right Eye; his Arm shall be clean dried up, and his right Eye shall be utterly darkned. Mark this as long as you live. A Minister that does not look after his Parish in his own Person, but leaves it to the Care of a Hireling, is not really a Minister; but he is an Idol. For he has a Mouth indeed; but he speaks not a Word in Season to the Souls of his People: He has Eyes; but he Sees not their Straits and Necessities: He has Ears; but he Hears not their Groans and Complaints for Bread: And he has Feet; but he walks not to Visit them upon their Sick or Death-Beds: And his Punishment for this is very Severe and Terrible. For, the Sword shall be upon his Arm, and upon his right Eye: His Arm shall be clean dried up, and his right Eye shall be utterly darkned. And when all this is come upon thee; what

what? Oh! what wilt thou be the better for all that thou hast gotten by thy *Pluralities* and *Non-Residence*! What! Oh! what will thy Money then avail thee, when *Thou* and *It* must Perish both together! And, if poor Ignorant People have such a *Covetous* and *Voluptuous* Man for their Minister, must they not, without a Miracle, necessarily perish for want of Knowledge? For, how can a *Covetous* Man, whose God is his Gold, Preach against the *Love of Money*, which is the *Root of all Evil*? Or, how can a *Voluptuous* Man, whose God is his *Belly*, Preach for Fasting, Self-denial and Mortification? Or, if he does: yet, how can any one that hears him, believe a Word of what he says, when that may be justly said to him, which was unjustly said to *Moses*, Numb. xvi. 14. *Wilt thou put out the Eyes of these Men*, by Preaching that to them, which thou thyself wilt not Practice; and by binding heavy Burthens, and grievous to be born, and laying them on their Shoulders, but thou thyself wilt not move them with one of thy Fingers? Mat. xxiii. 4.

Fifthly, The Scripture tells us of others, who, though they are neither Ignorant, nor Idle, Covetous, nor Voluptuous; yet, they are Proud. They love the Praise of Men, more than the Praise of God; they love to be called Rabbi; they love the uppermost Rooms at Feasts, and the chief Seats in the Synagogues, and Greetings in the Markets. They scorn such a poor place as *Nazareth* or *Galilee*; they must needs be at *Jerusalem*, and preach at Court, where they may be most seen of Men. They think it below them to Feed God's Lambs, to Catechize little Children, to Conceal their Learning, and to speak so plain, that the most Ignorant Men and Women may understand and profit by them. They think, that preaching the Law, which is to Convince Men of Sin, and to humble them for it, can never work upon Gentlemen, which are only to be wrought upon by easier and gentler Methods. That is, in plain English, by smooth and flattering

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Words

Words. They think, that preaching of Election, Vocation, Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification, is nothing else but so much *spiritual Cant*. And indeed, *They think no Preaching is good for any thing, but that which is really good for nothing : That which is High and Lofty, Quaint or Witty, Scholastical or Controversial, and above the Reach of ordinary Capacities.* And therefore, our Saviour makes it as great a Miracle, and as certain a Sign of the True *Messias*, that the Poor had the Gospel preached unto them, as that the Blind saw, the Lame walked, the Deaf heard, the Lepers were cleansed, and the Dead were raised up from Death to Life, *Matth. xi. 5.* And if poor Ignorant People have such a Proud Man for their Minister, must they not, without a Miracle, necessarily perish for want of Knowledge ? For, if an Archer does always shoot above the Mark, can he ever Hit it ? And if a Minister does always preach above the Capacity of his Hearers, can he ever Teach them Knowledge ? Is it not all one, as if he spoke in an *Unknown Tongue*, and were altogether a *Barbarian* to them ?

Sixtly, The Scripture tells us of others, who, though they are neither Ignorant, nor Idle, nor Covetous, nor Voluptuous, nor Proud : Yet, they are *Deceitful ; They handle the Word of God deceitfully ; they deceive God's People, by preaching that to them for God's Word, which is not really His, but their Own ; they preach to them the Inticing Words of Man's Wisdom, instead of the Sincere Milk of the Word ; they shew them the Form, and not the Power of Godliness ; they Feed them with Ceremonies and Shadows, instead of Substantial and Fundamental Truths ; They puff them up with science falsely so called, instead of the Simplicity of the Gospel ; they spoil them thro' Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ ; They Teach them for Doctrines the Commandments of Men ; yea, they Teach them the very Doctrines*
of

of Devils, *Matth. xv. 9.* compared with *Colos. ii. 8.* and *1 Tim. iv. 1.* And by this means, all true Gospel-preaching is in many places much neglected; and in some places it is almost wholly lost. And if poor Ignorant People have such a *deceitful Handler and Corrupter of God's Word* for their Minister, must they not, without a Miracle, necessarily perish for want of Knowledge? For, how can a Man possibly subsist, if he has only a Stone for Bread, a Scorpion for an Egg, and a Cup of Poison for the Blood of the Grape?

Seventhly, The Scripture tells us of others, who, tho' they are neither Ignorant, nor Idle, nor Covetous, nor Voluptuous, nor Proud, nor Deceitful; yet, they are *far Worse* than all these. For, says our Saviour, *Mat. xxiii. 13. Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites. For, ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men. Ye neither go into it yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* And then it follows, *Ver. 15. Ye compass Sea and Land to make one Profelyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the Child of Hell than yourselves.* They would neither be good themselves, nor suffer others to be so. They would neither Preach themselves nor suffer Christ and his Apostles to Preach to the People, that were ready to Perish for want of a Plain and a Searching Preacher. They were like those two Priests, *Hophni and Phinehas*, who would neither be Chast themselves, nor suffer others to be so, but *lay with the Women that Assembled at the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, 1 Sam. ii. 22.* They were like *Ahab and Zedekiah*, these two other Priests, who would neither be Chast themselves, nor suffer others to be so, but *were Roasted in the Fire by the King of Babylon for committing Adultery with their Neighbours Wives, Jer. xxix. 22, 23.* And they were like those other Ungodly Priests and People of the Jews who *Prosecuted St. Paul, and forbid him to Preach to the Gentiles, that they might be Saved, to fill up their*

Sins alway. For, the Wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost, 1 Thes ii. 15, 16. Mark this all of you as long as you Live: If a Minister refuses to Preach himself, and forbids others to Preach; it is a certain Sign, that he is come to the Height of Wickedness, and has filled up the full measure of all his Sins, and the Wrath of God is come upon him to the uttermost. And yet, there were not only some few of the Clergy, that were then thus notoriously Wicked. For, our Saviour lays it to the Charge of all the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Preachers of the Law in his time. And they all were so far from denying that Charge, that they Gloried, and Boasted in it. For, say they to the Officers, that would not be so bad as they would have them be, by Apprehending Christ, and bringing him Bound to them, Are ye also Deceived? Have any of the Rulers, or Pharisees believed on him? But, this People, who knoweth not the Law, are Cursed, John vii. 47, 48, 49. And if poor Ignorant People have such Men as these for their Ministers, must they not, without a Miracle, necessarily Perish for want of Knowledge? For, how can they possibly learn any true and saving Knowledge, when their Ministers Curse them for believing on Christ, and Damn them to the pit of Hell, for refusing to be as Bad as they would make them? That is, twofold more the Children of Hell than themselves.

And thus I have proved out of God's own Word, without any Addition of my own Head; by plain and expresse Texts of Scripture, that, Though there be a great many Ministers in a City or Country; yet, the Common People may be ready to Faint and to Perish for want of Knowledge; for want of Plain, Affectionate, Practical, and Scripture-Preaching: Yea, and their Case may be so desperately Bad, that nothing, but a Company of Poor silly Sheep scattered abroad without a Shepherd, can possibly represent their deplorable Condition. And that is the Doctrine with its Proof. The Use of it is this.

First,

First, The Holy Ghost has caused the Faults of God's Ministers to be written in Scripture : And therefore, we that are the Preachers of God's Word, are bound in Conscience to preach against those Ministerial Faults, in our Sermons before the Clergy : Especially, upon such publick Occasions, as Ember-Week and Ordination-day ; that so, we may all be called upon, and stirred up to the better Performance of our Duty. For, thus did the Prophets in the Old Testament, as is plain from *Mal. ii. 1, 2.* *O ye Priests, this Commandment is for You : If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give Glory unto my Name, saith the Lord of Hosts ; I will even send a Curse upon you, and I will Curse your Blessings : Yea, I have Cursed them already, because ye do not put it to heart.* And thus did Christ himself in the New Testament, as is plain from *Mat. xxiii.* throughout the Chapter ; Where he does Rebuke the Faults of the *Jewish* Clergy so sharply, and does denounce so many Woes and Curses against them, as are enough to make a Man's Heart to ache, and to break in pieces, when he only hears them read. And therefore, if there be a Minister here present, that Hates him that tells him of his Faults, *in God's Name, out of God's Word, and by God's Authority* : Then, thou Hatest the Holy Ghost, that commands him to do so : Thou Hatest the Prophets, that did so : Thou Hatest Christ himself, that did so too : And thou Hatest good Old *Eli*, that strictly charged and commanded *Samuel* to do so to him, upon pain of Damnation, *1 Sam. iii. 17.* If there be a Minister here present, that Hates him that thus tells him of his Faults ; Then thou art worse than the common People, that desir'd St. *John Baptist* to do so to them, *Luke iii. 10.* Thou art worse than the common Soldiers, that desir'd him to do so to them, *Ver. 14.* Thou art worse than the Publicans and Sinners, that desir'd him to do so to them, *Ver. 12.* Thou art worse than a Heathen, an Infidel, a *Belshazzar*,

Nabazar, that highly rewarded the Prophet *Daniel* for doing so to him, *Dan. v. 25.* with the following Verses, Yea, and in one Word, Thou art worse than the very Brute Beasts that Perish. And therefore, the Holy Ghost calls thee a *Brutish Pastor*, *Jer. x. 21.* And he gives thee the Reason for it, *Prov. xii. 1.* Because, *He that hateth Reproof is Brutish.* For, he does like a Brute, that *kicks against the Pricks, and kicks against the Goad*, that strikes him. He Hates to be Reprov'd, and he flies into his Reprover's Face, and he does him a Mischief, if he can. And how then canst thou pretend to be a Minister, *when thou hatest the Holy Ghost, hatest the Prophets, hatest good old Eli, and hatest Christ himself?* How canst thou pretend to be a Man, a Learned Man, a Christian Man, and a Clergy-man; *when thou art worse than the common People, worse than the common Soldiers, worse than the Publicans and Sinners, worse than the Heathens and Infidels; yea, and worse than the very Brutes themselves?* And yet, This, and only this is thy Name in the Judgment of God, *whatever Men judge of thee, if thou hatest him that tells thee of thy Faults, in God's Name, out of God's Word, and by God's Authority.* But, my Beloved in the Lord; *We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak,* *Heb. vi. 9.*

Secondly, The Holy Ghost has caused the Faults of God's Ministers to be written in Scripture. And the same Holy Ghost assures us, *that whatever is written in Scripture is written for our Instruction.* And therefore, let every Minister here present lay his Hand to his Heart, and examine his own Soul strictly and impartially, as he will answer it before God at the Day of Judgment: let him, I say, thus try and search himself, whether he is not guilty of those Faults, which the Ministers of former Ages are recorded in Scripture to have been guilty of; that so he may speedily and effectually Repent of them in
this

this World, and avoid that everlasting Destruction, that is due to him for them in the World to come.

First of all, Hast thou entred upon the Ministry, when thou wert *ignorant* of the Ministerial Office? *Hast thou ran before God sent thee? and prophesyd to others, before the Lord had spoken to thee?* Jer. xxiii. 21. Hast thou set upon the Study of Divinity, before thou hast scarce Read, and much less digested a Sound Course of Philosophy? Hast thou set up for a Preacher, before thou hast ever Read thy Bible *thoroughly and to the Purpose?* Or, dost thou even yet know and understand the Languages, which thy Bible was originally writ in? And hast thou taken upon thyself the Cure of Souls, before thou wert learned enough, or perhaps of *Age* to undertake it?

Secondly, If thou art learned enough, yet, art thou *willing* enough to discharge so great a Cure? Art thou not idle? Dost thou Read Prayers in thy Parish-Church every Day in the Week, both Morning and Evening? Dost thou Preach every Lord's Day in the Forenoon, and Catechise in the Afternoon? Dost thou Catechise and Read a Homily every Holy-day, *as the Rubrick commands thee?* Dost thou go from House to House in the Week days, and see whether thy People do Pray, and perform all other Christian Duties in their Families? *Acts xx. 20.* And dost thou do all this thyself, and in thy own Person? Or, dost thou only employ a Mercenary Hireling, who is neither Able nor Willing to do it for thee, but only goes to thy Church on the Lord's day, and never minds thy People all the Week after?

Thirdly, If thou art neither Ignorant, nor Idle; but Learned enough, and Laborious enough: Yet, art thou not *Covetous* and *Voluptuous*? Art thou not given to filthy Lucre, and filthy Pleasure? *Does not Whoredom, and Wine, and strong Drink take away thy Heart;* and take up that Time, which thou oughtest to spend in hard Study, bitter Weeping, fervent Prayer,

Prayer, and frequent Fasting? *Hof. iv. 11.* Does not a Stingy, a Sordid, and an Immoderate Love of the World make thee to *join House to House, and to lay Field to Field*, and to heap up Preferment upon Preferment, till there be no Place for thy poor Brethren, that thou mayest be placed Alone in the midst of the Earth? *Isa. v. 8.* And when thou hast gotten all this together, does there not some Secret Curse go along with it, and make it all to be Bitter unto thee; yea, and make thee to be Bitter and Cruel to thine own Bowels, and hinder thee from being Charitable and Hospitable unto others, and also from being Just to thyself, whom thou in a manner starvest for want of Necessaries? Does not thy Living overthrow thy Preaching? And does not thy Practice make all thy Sermons of no Effect?

Fourthly, If thou art neither Ignorant, nor Idle, nor Covetous, nor Voluptuous; yet, art thou not Proud? Dost thou not scorn to be so Plain in thy Sermons, as to be counted a Fool for Christ's sake? Dost thou not scorn to quit thy Human Learning, for the Foolishness of Preaching? Dost thou not scorn to use a Familiar and a Popular Way of Preaching, when thou thinkest thou canst speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels? Dost thou not scorn to Quote any Texts of Scripture in thy Sermons, and to use Scripture Expressions, Scripture Proofs, Scripture Similitudes, Scripture Examples, and Scripture Applications, as if they were all too coarse and homely for the Itching Ears of this Adulterous Age? Dost thou not disdain the very Name of a Country Parson, and wholly set up for a Higher, a Richer, and an Easier Office? Dost thou not disdain to go and Visit Poor People, to seek that which was lost, to bring again that which was driven away, to bind up that which was broken, and to strengthen that which was Sick? *Ezek. xxxiv. 16.* Dost thou not chuse to be the Author of a New Notion, tho' it be False, rather than to Preach and to Press an

an Old Known Truth upon the Hearts of thy Hearers? Dost thou not chuse to Introduce Three Gods into the World, rather than be content with the Old and True Way of Expressing the Trinity?

Fifthly, If thou art neither Ignorant, nor Idle, nor Covetous, nor Voluptuous, nor Proud; yet, art thou not Deceitful? Art thou not a Deceitful Handler and Corrupter of Gods Word: Dost thou not hold that Original Sin, is not Properly a Sin; or if it be so; it is but the Least of all Sins? Dost thou not hold the Pelagian and Arminian Doctrines, instead of the Articles and Homilies of our Church? Dost thou not say, that our Articles are only Articles of Peace, and not Articles of Religion? Dost thou not say, that our Homilies do only contain such Doctrines, as were Necessary for the Time they were Write in, but not for the Time we now Live in? Dost thou not Adore Free-will so far, as to make an Idol of it; yea, and to make God himself to Wait upon its Choice, in the Almighty Work of thy Conversion? Dost thou not make God to be in a manner an Idle Spectator, and thy Free-will to be the only Agent in thy Salvation? Dost thou not attribute so much to Natural Reason, and Moral Suasion, that the Powerful, and Effectual, and Irresistible, working of Gods Spirit, is wholly Rejected by thee as a mere Dream, and an Idle Fancy? Dost thou not Extol thine own Strength so far, as to frustrate the Grace of Christ? Dost not Thou, and not God, make thee to Differ from another, which is directly contrary to St. Pauls Doctrine? 1 Cor. iv. 7. Dost thou not lay so great a stress upon little Things, as to neglect the weightier matters of the Law? Dost thou not make a Conscience of Bowing at the Name of Jesus; and dost thou make any Conscience at all of Cursing and Swearing by his Name, by his Blood, and by his Wounds? Dost thou not make a Conscience of Signing a Child with the Sign of the Cross in Baptism; and dost thou make any Conscience

at all of *Catechizing* that Child in the *Doctrine of the Cross of Christ*, tho' both the *Rubrick*, and the 59th Canon Command thee to do so, *every Lords-day and Holy-day in the Afternoon*, upon pain of *Sharp Reproof* for the first Fault, *Suspension* for the second, and *Ex-communication* for the third? Dost thou not cry out mightily against those that *Sacrilegiously* rob the Church of its *Patrimony*; and dost thou at all cry out against thy Self and Others, that rob *Christ* of those *Souls*, which he has purchased with his Blood, by Suffering them to Perish for want of True and Saving Knowledge? Dost thou not cry out mightily against those People, that rob thee of the least of thy *Tithes* and *Offerings*; and dost thou at all cry out against thy Self and Others, that rob those very People of *their Hearts Blood, their Lives, their Souls, and their Salvation*, by suffering them to be Damned for want of *Catechizing* and *Preaching*? Dost thou not cry out mightily against the *Papists*, for feeding their Communicants with mere *Species and Accidents*, instead of Substantial Bread and Wine, representing the Body and Blood of Christ; and dost not thou thy self at the same time Serve thy Hearers just at the same Rate, whilst thou Contendest so much and so earnestly for the *Rites and Ceremonies*, and so little, *if at all*, for the *Doctrines* of our Church.

Sixthly, If thou art neither Ignorant, nor Idle, nor Covetous nor Voluptuous, nor Proud, nor Deceitful; yet art thou not *far Worse* than all these? For, dost thou not refuse to be Good thy self, and hinder others to be so? Dost thou not refuse to Fast upon Ember-week thy self, and hinder others to do so, and Reproach them for it? Dost thou not refuse to Preach thy self, and hinder others to do so, if thou thinkest they *dare* to Preach against thy Great, and Crying, and Reigning, and Damning Sins? Thy *Pluralities, thy Non-Residence, thy Arminianism, and thy Shameful Neglect of Catechizing, and daily Prayers in thy*

thy Church and Family? Dost thou not get as many Church Preferments as thou possibly canst, and refuse to Preach in them All Thyself, and thereby hinder all others, that are both Learned and Laborious; both Able and Willing to Preach in them in their own Persons? Dost thou not Envy and Hate a good Orthodox Minister, in thy very Heart and Soul; and say of him, as the Scribes and Pharisees did of Christ; He hath a Devil, and is Mad, why bear ye Him? John x. 20. Yea, and to compleat thy Character; Dost thou not reckon it a Greater Fault for a Man, to Tell thee of these thy Faults, than it is for thee and others to be Guilty of them?

And thus I have endeavoured to Examine every Minister here present, out of God's own Word, whether he be really guilty of those Sins, which the Ministers of former Ages are Recorded in Scripture to have been guilty of. I neither *Accuse* you of, nor *Condemn* you for, any one of all these Sins. But, I wish with all my Heart and Soul, that both God and your own Consciences may *Acquit* and *Absolve* you from them all. For, I call Heaven and Earth to Record, *That I do not say these things to shame you; but, as my Beloved Brethren, I Warn you, 1 Cor. iv. 14. I Warn you all in God's Name, and in Christ's Name, that you do not think yourselves Altogether Free from All, or from any One of all these Sins. For, Original Sin, which has in itself the Seed of every Sin whatever, is not Wholly Mortified in the Best of you all: And therefore, it may make you to fall into the very Worst of all these Sins; as it made St. Peter to Deny Christ with Cursing and Swearing; and Hazeael to do such Barbarous things, as he thought None but a Dog could ever have done; 2 Kings viii. 13. I Warn you all in God's Name, and in Christ's Name, that, as you value the Salvation of your own Souls, and of them that hear you; so be ye sure, not to find Fault*

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with the Holy Ghost, who has commanded me, upon pain of Damnation, to Warn you all against all these Sins: Nor yet to find Fault with Me, who, *according to the measure of Grace and Faithfulness He has given me*, have Conscientiously obey'd his Command, and incurr'd your Displeasure for the Good of your Souls: But, lay all the Fault, *if you are guilty of any Fault*, where it only ought to be laid, even upon your own selves. And resolve, resolve immediately upon a full and perfect Amendment of Life, from this very Day, from this very Hour, from this very Moment. For, we do not know, whether any of us shall Live one Moment longer. We do not know, whether You or I shall Live to go out of this Church, or ever to come into it again, to be told of, and stirred up to, the conscientious discharge of our Ministerial Office, thus Plainly, thus Impartially, thus Convincingly; and I heartily pray to God, *Effectually*.

Oh! my Beloved Brethren, do not think that I am *too earnest*, or *too much concerned* for your and your People's Immortal Souls: For, I know, I know, that your Souls have cost Christ very dear; they have cost him his *Heart's Blood*, they have cost him his *Life*. And can I be *too much concerned*, or, can I ever be concerned *enough*, for the Salvation of those Souls, which have cost my Lord, my God, and my Saviour; which have cost Christ Crucified so much?

Oh! those Emphatical Words of His to *Simon Peter*, are always sounding in my Ears, and deeply Rooted in my very Heart and Soul. *Lovest thou Me? Feed my Lambs. Lovest thou Me? Feed my Sheep. Lovest thou Me? Feed my Sheep*, John xxi. 15, 16, 17. And does Christ repeat this *Thrice*, that it may make the *deeper* Impression upon us; and are we so *insensible*, and so *fearful*, and so *judicially hardened*, as not to take the *least* Notice of it? Does

Does Christ *here* try a Minister's Love to him, *Only* by *Catechizing his Lambs, and Preaching to his Sheep?* And can I pretend to Love Christ, when I neither Catechize nor Preach *in my own Parish* all the Year, or perhaps all my Life long? Or, can I ever be *too strict* in recommending these Duties, wherein my Love to Christ does *only* consist? My Love to Christ, *who loved Me, and gave Himself for Me, when I was Dead in Trespasses and Sins,* Gal. ii. 20. compared with *Ephes. ii. 1.*

Oh! these Eyes of mine, these Eyes of mine, have seen, how poor Country-people *do sit in Darkness and the shadow of Death,* and are as Ignorant of Christianity, as if Christ had scarce ever been preached to them! And I am verily perswaded, that if You, who have Great and Rich Places in the Country, would but do as Christ did; *would but Go and See,* how the *Multitudes,* committed to your Charge, *do Faint, and are Tired, and Wearied, and lie down, and are scattered abroad, as Sheep having no Shepherd;* you could not possibly chuse but be moved with Pity and Compassion on them; unless your Hearts are all Stone, and your Bowels are all Brass, and ye yourselves are more Barbarous than the Sea-Monsters, which draw out the Breast, and give Suck to their Young Ones. Lam. iv. 3.

Oh! my Beloved Brethren, do not think that I am *too earnest, or too much concerned* for your and your peoples Immortal Souls. For, *whether we be besides ourselves, it is to God; or, whether we be sober, it is for your Cause:* For, the Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto Themselves, but unto Him, which died for them, and Rose again, 2 Cor. v. 13, 14, 15.

Thirdly, The Holy Ghost has caused the Faults of God's Ministers to be written in Scripture. And the

the same Holy Ghost assures us, that the Faults of us Ministers are the Cause, why our People do not Repent of their Sins, and Reform their Lives. For, says the Lord, *Jer. xxiii. 22. If the Prophets had stood in my Counsel, and had caused my People to hear my Words; then, they should have turned from their evil Way, and from the evil of their Doings.* Where you see, that the Cause, and indeed, the Only Cause, here mentioned, why the People did not turn from their evil Way, and their evil Doings, is, because the Prophets had not stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and had not caused them to hear his Words. And if you will turn to *Mal. ii. 6.* You will there find, that the great Success of Levi's Ministry, in the Conversion of Souls unto God, is Only attributed to his Holy Preaching and Holy Living. For, *the Law of Truth was in his Mouth, and Iniquity was not found in his Lips; he walked with God in Peace and Equity; and therefore, he did turn many away from Iniquity.* And, if thy Bad Life be the Cause, and the Only Cause, here mentioned, why thy Parishoners are so Bad; Good God, what will become of thy poor Soul? Is not thine own Badness enough to Damn thee, but thou must also Add all the Badness of thy whole Parish to make thy Damnation the more Intolerable? Can not thine own Sins sink thee deep enough into Hell, but thou must also Add all the Sins of thy People, to sink thee deeper and deeper into the bottomless Pit, and the Gulf impassable? Oh! thou hast Sins enough of thine own to answer for, *though thou art the best Man upon Earth; and therefore, be not thou Partaker of other Mens Sins,* 1 Tim. v. 22.

Fourthly, The Holy Ghost has caused the Faults of God's Ministers to be written in Scripture: And the same Holy Ghost assures us, that the Faults of us Ministers are the true and the Only Cause, *Why God does curse our very Blessings, and corrupt our Seed, and spread Dung upon our Faces, even the Dung of our*
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Solemn Feasts, and make us Contemptible and Base before all the people, Mal. ii. 2, 3, 9. Where you see, that all the Seed both of your Body and Ground, all your Estate, all your Land, all your Money, all your Cattle, and all your other temporal Blessings, are Cursed by God himself, because you do not perform the Work of your Ministry without Fear or Favour; but, are Partial in the Law of the most High, Ver. 9. You either Fear such a Mans Person, and Dare not; or you Admire such a Mans Person, and Will not tell him of his Sins, in Hope of getting something from him, by your base and cowardly Silence. And because you are thus Partial in Gods Law, having Mens Persons in Admiration because of Advantage, and Preferring one before another; therefore, God will certainly curse all your Blessings; yea, and he has cursed them already, Ver. 2. And therefore, if the common Observation, that is in every ones Mouth, be really True: I do not say, It is True: But, if it be really True: That Clergymens Children are more Unfortunate than other Mens; then, One Great Cause of it is this, Their Fathers do not faithfully discharge their Ministerial Office. And therefore, God, according to his Threatning, does corrupt all the Seed both of their Body and Ground, and lays a dreadful Curse upon all their Blessings and Estates. And those Estates and Gods Curse are Entailed together upon their Children; as the Leprosy and Estate of Gehazi descended together upon his Posterity, 2 Kings v. 27. And therefore, the Meat, Drink, Clothes, Portions, and all other things, which the Children of such Ungodly Ministers have, are cursed with the Curse of God. And, how then can such Children possibly Thrive and Prosper in the World? For, if the Blessing of God makes a Man Rich, the Curse of God must needs make him Poor, Prov. x. 22.

And here in our Church, no Man can be received into the Ministry, but he must first make a Solemn Subscription, that he acknowledgeth the Articles and
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the *Common-Prayer Book* to be agreeable to God's Word, and that he will use *That*, and *No other Form*, in publick Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments. And no Man that is thus solemnly received into the Ministry, can be Lawfully admitted into any Ecclesiastical Place, *With or Without Cure of Souls*, but he must also *Take a most Strict and Severe Oath against Simony*. And if it were possible for us to know how many have broken this *Oath*, and are guilty of *Perjury*; and have broken their *Subscription* to the *Common-Prayer Book*, which they pretend to Magnifie and Admire so much, *by neglecting to Catechize, and to Read the Daily Prayers and Homilies*; and have broken their *Subscription* to the *Articles*, *by private Disputing, publick Preaching and Printing against them*: If, I say, it were possible for us to know, how many are guilty of these things; it would make us All, *if we have but the least Sense of their miserable State*, to quake and tremble to Think of their Numbers. And yet, all these Men have all their Blessings, and all their Estates, *thus unlawfully gotten*, cursed with the Curse of God. And they cannot possibly leave them to their Children, but they must also at the same time necessarily leave the Curse of God along with them. And how then can such Children, *while they Keep and Live upon these accursed things, without making any Restitution of them to the Right Owners*: How can they, I say, possibly Thrive and Prosper in the World, unless God will suffer them to do so *on Purpose*, that *their Prosperity may destroy them*, and make their Destruction the more Intolerable, *Prov. i. 32.*

And indeed, if a Man seriously considers the Proceedings of God in this Particular, without all *Prejudice and Partiality*, he will presently find them to be most highly Reasonable. For, all people committed to a Ministers Charge, are, or at least he is to endeavour to make them, *his Children according to the*

the Spirit, begotten again, through his Ministry, to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, Gal. iv. 19. compared with 1 Pet. i. 3. And, if a Minister, that does not Catechize and Preach in his own Parish-Church, does Force his Children according to the Spirit, to go from Parish to Parish, and from Church to Church, to beg a little spiritual Food for their Souls, that are ready to starve for Hunger and Thirst ; then, is it not most highly reasonable, that his Children according to the Flesh, should be forced to go from House to House, and to beg their Bread from Door to Door ? And if a Minister forces his Spiritual Children, to starve for want of the Body and Blood of Christ frequently Administred to them in the Blessed Sacrament ; then, is it not most highly reasonable, that his Natural Children, should be forced to Starve for want of Meat and Drink ?

Sure I am, *whatever you think of this Now*, God has long since Threatned it, and he will certainly bring it to pass. For, says the Lord, *Hos. iv. 6, 7. My people are destroyed for lack of Knowledge ; because thou hast rejected Knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me ; seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy Children, and change their Glory into Shame : And the Priests eat up the Sin of my people, and they set their Heart on their Iniquity.* That is, they Eat and Feast upon the Sacrifices, which my people offer for their Sins ; and they are heartily glad, that they commit so many Sins, and do not at all endeavour to Reclaim 'em, lest their Gain should be lost. And, then it follows, *Ver. 10. They shall eat, of those Sacrifices unlawfully gotten, and they shall not have enough ; they shall commit Whoredom, thinking thereby to increase their Children, and they shall not Increase ; because they have left off to take heed to the Lord.* Where you see, that the Sins of the Priests

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are Threatned with *Scarcity of Bread*, and they Affect and Reach their *Children as well as themselves*. And, you also see, that every Morsel you eat, and every Draught you drink, and every Rag of Clothes you and your Children wear, *are the Price of the Blood and Souls of those poor People*, which are Starved on Earth, and Damned in Hell, for want of your Catechizing and Preaching. Every *Glass of Wine* you drink, is *Bought* with the Price, and *Mingled* with the *Blood*, of those poor People, which Perish through your Neglect. *You Grind the Faces of the poor*; and then, as the *Psalmist* elegantly expresseth it, *You eat them up for Bread*, whenever you Feed yourselves with the *Tithes and Offerings* of those People, who are ready to Perish everlastingly, because of your *shameful Absence* from them all the Year long. And by this means, *Ye cover the Altar of the Lord with the Tears, the Weeping, and the Crying out of those Poor, Starved, and Damned Souls*; *Insomuch that the Lord regardeth not your Offering any more, nor receiveth it with good will at your Hands*, Mal. ii. 13.

And, how then can you ever expect, that your Estates, *thus Damnably gotten*, should ever *Thrive or Prosper* with You or your Children? And therefore, though you have no Regard to your own Souls, nor to the Souls of your People, nor to the Blood of Christ, which was Shed for the Redemption both of your and their Souls; yet however, have some little Regard to the Bodies and Souls of your poor Children. Oh! do not make them a *Generation of God's Wrath*! Do not make them the Heirs of your Vices as well as your Estates. Do not make them to Inherit your Curses as well as your Blessings. Oh! remember what a dreadful Legacy *Joab* left to his Children, 2 Sam. iii. 29. One of them was to have an *Issue*, another a *Leprosy*, another to lean on his Staff for Lameness, another

another to fall on the Sword, another to lack Bread. And canst thou find in thy Heart to leave thy Children no better ; yea, for worse Legacies than these are ? Canst thou find in thy Heart to leave thy Ignorance and Idleness to one, Covetousness and Voluptuousness to another, thy Pride and Malice to another, and thy Neglect of Catechizing, Preaching, and daily Prayers in thy Church and Family to another of thy Children ? Canst thou find in thy Heart to leave thy Children no better Legacies than these are ? Canst thou pretend to Love thy Children, and yet leave them Nothing to Live upon, but thy Vices and thy Curses the Tears of the Living, and the Blood of the Dead ? And canst thou still expect, that they should Thrive and Prosper in the World, when this is all the Portion, and all the Stock, thou givest them, to begin the World, and to set up with ?

Fifthly, There was heretofore a Generation of Men, who cried up, *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord*, Jer. vii. 4. And yet, those very Men were the greatest Enemies to that Temple. For, it is there expressly said of them, Ver. 6. 9. *That they would oppress the Poor, the Fatherless, and the Widow ; they would shed innocent Blood, Steal, Murder, commit Adultery, Swear falsely, burn Incense to Baal, and walk after other God's.* And have not We just such another sort of Men now adays, who cry up, *The Church, The Church, The Church* ; and yet, will do Nothing for the Church, but Drink, and Swear, and Whore, and take away the Church-Land, and Call the Best Men of its Communion, the Soundest Preachers and the Strictest Livers, a Company of Puritans and Fanaticks ? And these Men, I know very well, will presently pretend a great deal of Zeal, and will find Fault with those Texts of Scripture, which I have Quoted out of God's own Word for the Proof of my

Doctrine: And to these Men I will only say thus much, *A chaste Virgin*, or a *chaste Wife*, does not at all think herself abused, when she hears a *Whore* or an *Adulteress* set forth in her proper Colours: And a *Learned* and a *Labourious* Minister, does not at all think Himself, or the Ministerial Office, abused; when an *Ignorant*, an *Idle*, a *Covetous*, a *Wanton*, and a *Proud Pharisee* is described to the Life. If any Man here present finds himself *Touch'd*; in God's Name, let him Reform and Amend: And if not, why does he then find Fault? Let him rather Bless God that he stands, and *take heed that he do not fall*.

When we thus *lay the Axe to the Root of the Tree*, and begin, where God's Judgments usually do, *with God's own House first*, and *deal impartially with ourselves*; then, our Hearers will think we are in good Earnest, when we do not spare ourselves; they will think we have the same Blessed Spirit that *Moses* had, who did not *Spare* either Himself, or his Brother *Aaron*, or his Sister *Miriam*; but Plainly and Publickly recorded their Faults in Scripture, as well as others; and they will never be able to be *Angry* with us, for telling them of their Sins roundly and smartly to their Face. And indeed, to tell you my Mind freely, it is not our Privilege, *Only* to tell other Men of their Sins, and never to be told of our own. It is not our Prerogative, *Only* to declaim against other Mens Vices, and to *Live* and to *Reign* in our own without Controul. No no, *If ever the Church be Reformed, We Church-Men, and We Clergy-Men, must first Reform ourselves*. For, *We are the Salt of the Earth*; and therefore, we are to spend ourselves, *as Salt is spent*, to Season others, and to keep them from Corruption; and how can we do so, if we ourselves have lost our Saviour? *We are the Light of the World*; and therefore, we are to spend ourselves; *as a Candle is spent*, to enlighten others; and how can we do so, if we ourselves are all Darkness? *Mat. v. 13, 14.*

Sixthly,

Sixthly, If it be a dismal Sight to see several Thousands of poor people, Fainting, and ready to Perish for want of a little Meat and Drink to feed their Bodies ; then, is it not a *far worse* Sight to see several Thousands of poor people, Fainting, and ready to Perish for want of good Catechizing and Preaching to feed their Souls ? For, though a Man's Body starve for want of Meat and Drink ; yet, his Soul may go to Heaven notwithstanding ; as is plain from what is recorded of *Lazarus*, *Luke* xvi. 21, 22. But, if a Man's Soul starve for want of Catechizing and Preaching, both his Body and his Soul, *in the Ordinary Way of God's Providence*, must needs go to Hell. A Famine of Bread is bad ; but, a Famine of the Word is far Worse. For, the Soul that feeds upon the Word, is far better than the Body that feeds upon Bread. For says the Prophet, *Isa.* xxx. 20. *Though the Lord give you the Bread of Adversity, and the Water of Affliction ; yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into a Corner any more.* Where you see, that though a Man be fed with *the Bread of Adversity, and the Water of Affliction* ; that is, such course Fare, as is scarce able to keep Body and Soul together ; yet, as long as he has his Teachers left him, and he may both *See and Hear them* ; he has that which is far better. For, *it is better to be a Beggar with the Gospel, than to be a King without it,* For, says the Holy K. David, *It is better to be a Door-keeper in the House of the Lord, than to dwell in the Tents of Ungodliness,* *Psal.* lxxxiv. 10. And therefore, it is a shrewd Sign, that God is extreme Angry with a People, when he takes away a good Minister from them. For, *When God took away Lot, the Preacher of Righteousness, from Sodom ; he presently rained upon it Fire and Brimstone from Heaven,* *Gen.* xix. 22, 24. It is a shrewd Sign, that God is extreme Angry with a people, when he sends them a bad Minister : For, *when*
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God sets a Lyon, a Wolf, or a Leopard, to Watch over a City, has he not a mind to Destroy it ? Jer. v. 6. And, when God put a lying Spirit into the Mouth of all Ahab's Prophets, to persuade him to go up to Ramoth-Gilead, had he not fully determined that Place for his Destruction ? 1 Kings xxii. 23. And therefore, you may all assure your selves, that God has not many People to save in that Parish, where he does not Settle a good Minister. For, if God has any Harvest in a Parish, he will certainly Send a good Labourer, to reap it down, to gather it up, and to put it into his Barn.

If God has any Sheep in a Parish, he will certainly Send a good Shepherd to look after them. For, if God has much People at Corinth, or any where else, he always Sends them a Paul, or some other able Minister, to Instruct them in the Faith of Christ, Acts xviii. 9. 10. For, the Harvest, the Sheep, and the People of God, are the Jewels of the Lord of Hosts, and they shall all be carefully made up, and safely kept by that watchful Keeper of Israel, that never Slumbers nor Sleeps, Mal. iii. 17. compared with Psal. cxxi. 4. For, that God, who takes care of every Sparrow, and numbred the Hairs of your Head, and suffers not so much as a Tear you shed in Secret to be lost, but puts it in his Bottle, and notes it in his Book ; that good God, who does all this, will never suffer the Souls of his People to be lost, for want of a good Minister to look after them ; unless you think that your Souls which are his Jewels, and for which Christ died, are not worth so much as a Sparrow, a Hair of your Head, or a Tear that falls down your Cheeks, when you weep for your Sins.

Lastly, If our Fore-Fathers Suffer'd so great a Famine of the Word, that they were ready to Faint and to Perish for want of a Preaching Minister ;

nister; then, let us have a great Care, that we do not Provoke God to take away this Inestimable Blessing from us. For, at present, *blessed be God for it*, We have the *Bible in our own Tongue*, that we may read it at Home; and we have some *Few Ministers, that Catechizes as well as Preach* out of it, that we may be Edified when we are in Church. *And God increase their Number for Christ his Sake*. But, if we make Light of this Un-speakable Mercy, we cannot possibly have it long. For, *If we do not heartily Repent of all our Sins, our Candlestick will be quickly removed from us*, Rev. ii. 5. *And if we do not bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance, the Kingdom of God will shortly be taken away from us, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruit thereof*, Mat. xxi. 43.

Nay further, If we come to Church, and do not come there with our Souls as well as our Bodies : *Mark this as long as you live* : If our Souls do not Think upon what the Minister Says to us out of God's Word ; but, do Think of our Studies, our Shops, our Fields ; or such a Man, or such a Woman, or the like : *If our Souls be Wandring and Roving abroad, while the Minister is Reading, Praying, Catechizing, or Preaching* : Then, we Provoke God to take away the Gospel from us : Yea, God himself has long Since Threatned to do so for this very Fault, *as little as you take it to be*. For, thus saith the Lord, *Isa. xxix. 13, 14. For as much as this people draw near me with their Mouth, and with their Lips do honour me ; but, have removed their Heart far from me : Therefore, Behold, I will proceed to do a Marvellous work, among this People, even a Marvellous Work, and a Wonder. For, the Wisdom of their Wise Men shall Perish, and the Understanding of their Prudent Men shall be Hid*. And therefore, when ever you come to Church with your Mouths and with your

your *Lips*; but, leave your *Hearts* and *Souls* at Home, or suffer them to *Wander* and to *Rove* abroad, and to Mind any thing, save *only* what God's Minister says to you out of God's own Word: Then, have a Care, have a great Care, *That the Wisdom of your Wise Men do not Perish, and the Understanding of your Prudent Men be not Hid*: And the Gospel, which is *the Word of Life*; the Gospel, which is *the Word of Salvation*; the Gospel, which is *the Word of God*, be not taken away from You for ever, and given to Others, that will make a better Use of it. From which dreadful Judgment, good Lord, deliver us all for Christ his Sake. *Amen, Amen.*

F I N I S.

